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ABSTRACT

Psychologists have recently given considerable attention to the study of relationship and friendship development, but the contributing social processes have not been examined in relation to each other over time. To examine the effects of disclosure, similarity, equity, and social exchange on satisfaction with a relationship and liking for one's partner over time, 39 pairs of previously unacquainted roommates completed questionnaires at the beginning and end of the school year measuring liking and satisfaction, self-disclosure, similarity, equity, and an index of reward designed to elicit information about the extent to which roommates had helped each other. Results showed that roommates tended to show substantial correlations on many measures, especially in the spring, although as a whole satisfaction decreased from fall to spring. All factors examined were significant predictors of initial liking. While exchange of rewards or resources appeared to be the most important factor over time in determining liking and satisfaction, the correlation between roommates suggests that the nature of the exchange process will change with time. Results also showed that prediction of whether a relationship would continue was just as accurate after 2 weeks as at 6 months, lending support to the importance of first impressions. (JAC)

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Social Exchange and Self-disclosure Between Roommates

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In the last decade, psychologists have given considerable attention to the study of relationship and friendship development (e.g. Altman & Taylor, 1973; Burgess & Huston, 1979; Kelley, 1979; Levinger & Raush, 1977). Among the theoretical constructs presumed to be central to relationship/friendship development are social exchange processes (Huston & Burgess 1979; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978) including equity (Hatfield, Utne, & Traupman, 1979), similarity (Byrne, 1971), and self-disclosure (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Jourard, 1971).

While each of these processes has received considerable individual research attention, they have not been examined in relation to each other over time. This is an important task for several reasons. First, the relative importance of any of these processes in friendship formation can be estimated only when they are studied jointly. Also, the interrelationships between these factors can be described only through joint analysis. This is particularly important since it has been proposed that all of the processes distinguished above will change over time as a relationship/friendship develops.

For example, Altman & Taylor (1973) demonstrated that over time persons will engage in increasingly intimate self-disclosure. Hatfield et al. (1979) postulate that over time relationships will become more equitable. According to Kelley (Kelley, 1979; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978), friends and participants in a relationship will transform the pattern of given environmental outcomes and options to take account of their partner's as well as their own gains. In a similar vein, Clark & Mills (1979) suggest that the basis of resource exchange will differ across relationships. According to Clark and Mills in exchange relationships a resource

is given either in repayment for a benefit previously received or with the firm expectation of repayment. In what Clark and Mills term communal relationships, resources are given without the concomitant obligation for rapid repayment because the other participant strongly desires or needs that resource. One purpose of the present study is to investigate the manner in which such changes may be mediated by liking and satisfaction with the relationship.

All the processes investigated here may potentially affect participants' attraction for one another and their satisfaction with the relationship. While some studies (e.g. Archer, Berg, & Runge, 1978; Worthy, Gary, & Kahn, 1969) have demonstrated that increased disclosure from a target leads to increased liking for that person, others have failed to find such a relationship (e.g. Erlich & Graeven, 1971). Walster, Walster and Traupmann (1978) found that as compared to persons in inequitable relationships, those in equitable ones reported feeling more content, happier, and more certain that the relationship would continue. Byrne (1971) has reported numerous examples of the beneficial effects of similarity on attraction.

Social exchange theory includes several constructs and principles relating to the amount of attraction participants will feel toward each other and towards the friendship/relationship. It postulates that people desire to maximize their outcomes and minimize their costs and will evaluate their present cost/benefit ration in terms of two standards. The comparison level (CL) represents the level of outcomes a participant feels he/she should be receiving in the relationship based on past experiences. Because people have had experience in both positive and negative

relationships in the past, the CL is assumed to have a value close to zero. A second standard, the comparison level for laternatives (CL_{alt}) represents the level of outcomes currently prevailing in the best alternative relationship to the present one. To the extent that oucomes exceed a person's CL, he/she should find the present relationship pleasurable and to the extent that outcomes exceed the CL_{alt}, the relationship will be stable.

The purpose of the present study was to examine, in a sample of roommates, the independent and joint effects of received disclosure, similarity, equity, and social exchange on satisfaction with a relationship and liking for one's partner over time. A second purpose was to examine changes occurring in these processes from the beginning to the end of a school year.

Method

Subjects and Procedure

Forty-eight pairs of previously unacquainted roommates from dormitories at UCLA served as subjects. Twenty-four of the pairs were males and twenty-four were females.68.5% were freshmen; 21.7% were sophomores and 8.6% were juniors. Subjects volunteered in response to advertisements posted in their dormitory asking for participants for a study of roommates. The initial testing sessions were held in a large dormitory lounge two weeks after the beginning of classes. At this time, subjects were told the study was exploring how the relationships between roommates might change over a year and that they would be asked to complete several questionnaires now and again in the Spring.

Subjects were contacted approximately six months later during the

Spring quarter and asked to participate in the follow-up testing session. Thirty-nine pairs of roommates (20 male and 19 female pairs) agreed to participate in the second session. In addition, three males and one female from the remaining pairs participated in the follow-up session without their roommates. The results I will report today are from subjects who took part in both sessions. Participants were paid $3.00 for participation in each session.

Measures:

Liking and Satisfaction: Liking was measured by means of Rubin's (1973) Liking Scale. The scale consists of nine questions measuring the positivity of impressions and feelings for another. Subjects reponded on 5-point scales and responses were summed to form a single index of liking. (Scores could range from 0 to 36.) Satisfaction was measured by a question asking subjects how satisfied or happy they were with their living arrangement as it currently stood. Subjects responded to this question on a 7-point scale ranging from Very dissatisfied to Very satisfied.

Self-disclosure: Received self-disclosure was measured by roommates' responses to the self-disclosure index developed by Miller, Berg, & Archer (in press). This scale consists of 10 topics of a general and fairly intimate nature (e.g., What is most important to me in life; What I like and dislike about myself). Respondents indicated the degree they had disclosed to their roommate on each of these topics. Responses were summed for the roommate's answers to these questions to form an index of received disclosure.

Similarity: An index of dissimilarity was computed by summing the absolute differences between the importance that subjects ascribed to 15 aspects of university life (e.g., studying, having time alone, fraternity/sorority activities) and the importance they believed these aspects had for their roommate. For all 15 items, ratings for own importance and predictions for roommates were made on 7-point scales, ranging from Very important to Not at all important.

Equity: Equity was measured with a question asking who was benefiting more from the current living arrangement. Subjects answered on a 7-point scale with endpoints labeled, "I am benefiting more" and "My roommate is benefiting more." This is quite similar to the Hatfield et al. (1979) global measure of equity-inequity. An index of equity was claculated by scoring one point for each scale point subjects' respones departed from the scale endpoints. Scores could thus range from 0 (least equitable) to 3 (most equitable).

Reward: Reward was calculated in three differing ways. A General Reward index was formed by summing subjects' answers to questions asking them to rate the extent to which their roommate had helped them with problems or projects and the extent to which their roommate had done favors for them. Both these questions were answered on 7-point bipolar scales.

In addition, to examine changes occurring in the type of benefits roommates exchanged over the course of a year, subjects were asked to respond to open-ended questions asking them to list the things their roommates had done to help them or that they had liked and also to list the things their roommate could do that would help them the most, regardless of whether or not he/she had done them. From these open-ended questions.

two indices were formed. A Total+ index was obtained by summing the number of things subjects listed in response to the first question. A Desires Met index was also calculated by counting the number of times those things subjects said would help most were in fact being received.

Comparison Level for Alternatives: CL_{alt} was measured by a question asking subjects how their present living arrangement compared with others they could have. Subjects answered on a 7-point scale with endpoints lebeled "A lot worse" and "A lot better."

All of the above measures were obtained in the Fall and again in the Spring. In addition, in the Spring, subjects were asked whether they planned to live with their present roommate again the following year. Of the subjects who participated in the Spring session, 17.9% said they did. 59.0% said they did not and 23.1% were undecided. The relatively large number of "undecideds" most likely results from the fact that dormotory space at UCLA is assigned on the basis of a lottery and some students who wished to room together had not found out the results of the lottery at the time of the second session.

Results and Discussion

Correlations Between Roommates

Correlations between roommates for the various measures and indices employed in this study appear in Table 1.

Table 1

Correlations of Measures Between Roommates

	Fall			Spring		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
Liking	.22	.41**	.31**	.47***	.59***	.50***
Satisfaction	.36*	.58***	.57***	.59***	.69***	.61***
General Reward Index	.0?	.17	.07	.36*	.36*	.35**
Total+	.51**	.51**	.52***$_a$	.30	.02	.17$_a$
Desires Met	-.03	-.10	-.10$_b$	.33*	.36*	.31**$_b$
CL_{alt}	.34*	-.11	.07$_c$	.42**	.54**	.49***$_c$
Perceived Equity	.17	-.25	.07	.28	.07	.19
Received Disclosure	.20	.19	.21	.42**	.18	.33**

Note: *p < .07, **p < .05, ***p < .01

Correlations with similar subscripts differ from each other at the .05 level (one-tailed).

As table 1 indicates, roommates tended to show substantial correlations on many measures, especially in the Spring. One exception to this is the perceived equity measure. The lack of a significant correlation between roommates for this measure is most likely due to a restriction of range. This index could take on only four possible values. If the raw scores, based on the 7-point scale are used, a correlation of -.41, $p < .01$ is found in the Spring. This indicates that as one roommate said he/she was underbenefitted, his/her partner tended to report being overbenefitted. It was nevertheless decided to use the transformed equity index in the

analysis being reported here since according to equity theory [Walster, Berscheid, & Walster (1973)] both overbenefit and underbenefit should have similar effects on satisfaction with a relationship.

A second aspect of Table 1 that merits discussion involves the changes in correlations from Fall to Spring for the Total+ and Desires Met indices. In the Fall, there was a significant relation between the total number of benefits roommates reported receiving from one another (Total+) but not between the number of benefits they said would have helped them most (Desires Met). In the Spring, the pattern was reversed. Several explanations might account for these changes.

First, one might postulate that the differences are due to the fact that time is required for one's roommate to learn what things would be most helpful. It would also be expected that this learning process would be facilitated through self-disclosure. Perhaps the easiest way for another to learn what helps you most is simply for you to tell him/her. In line with this, self-disclosure in both the Fall and Spring was significantly related to both the Total+ and Desires Met indices as they were measured at that time (all $rs > .23$, $ps < .05$). This explanation is weakened, however, by the finding that subjects were no more accurate in predicting how important the 15 aspects of university life were to their roommate in the Spring than they were in the Fall ($r = .38$ for Spring and .37 for Fall). In addition, this learning explanation does not adequately explain the decline in the Total+ index.

Another possible explanation might hold that by Spring, roommates were simply doing less for each other. This explanation is initially appealing in light of the fact that only 18% of the sample were definitely

planning to live together for another year at the time of the Spring testing, and the fact that satisfaction actually decreased from Fall to Spring in the sample as a whole [$t(82) = 3.51$, $p < .02$]. However, similar comparisons revealed no corresponding change in the Total+ or general reward indices [$t(82) < 1.15$, n.s.], and increases rather than decreases in the Desires Met index [$t(82) = 2.57$, $p < .02$]. Thus, despite the fact that roommates on the whole reported less satisfaction with their living arrangement in the Spring than they did in the Fall, they were receiving no fewer benefits in total, and were receiving more of the benefits they said could help them most.

A third, and perhaps the most likely explanation, for the changes found in the reward indices is that, over time, the nature of the exchange process changes in a qualitative way. The discinction between exchange and communal relationships that has been drawn by Clark in her paper today and other places (cf. Clark & Mills, 1979) seems particularly relevant. To reiterate: In exchange relationships, benefits are given either in repayment for a past benefit one has received or with the understanding that the receiver will repay the benefit soon. In communal relationships, benefits are given primarily because the recipient needs or strongly desires that benefit. If the relationships between roommates are viewed as moving from an exchange to a communal basis, the differences between correlations would be expected. In the Fall, when the relationship is of the exchange variety, they should be most concerned with maintaining a balance in the amount of benefits they give each other. By the Spring, when the relation has shifted to a communal basis, this concern with

equal amounts of exchange would have lessened. In its place would be a concern with providing those things the other finds most helpful. It is also noteworthy that the pattern of the General Reward index tended to follow that of the Desires Met index.

Path Analyses:

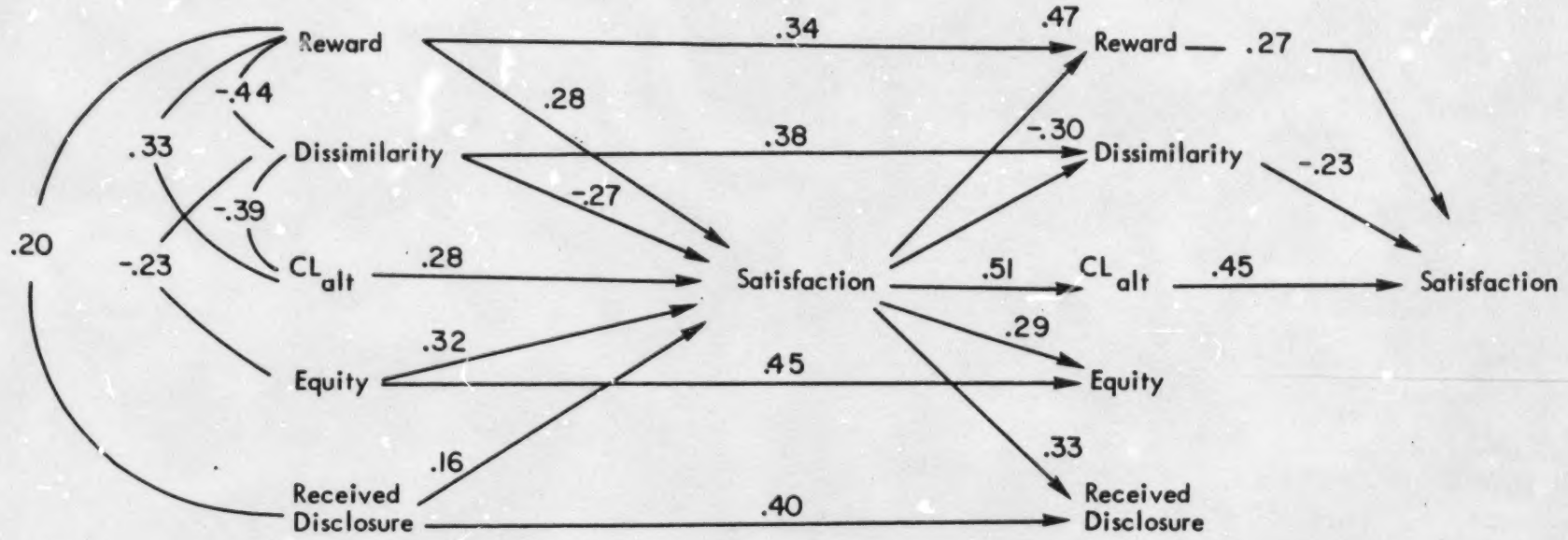
To explore the manner in which final liking and satisfaction were determined, hierarchical multiple regression equations were calculated on liking and satisfaction using the other variables as predictors. These analyses also describe the manner in which initial liking and satisfaction may influence the other processes explored here. The General Reward index was employed as the measure of reward as it appeared from other analysis to represent a compromise between the other two reward indices. Simplified models from the regressions are presented in Figures 1 and 2. The simplications consists of the deletion of paths with non-significant beta weights.

Results for satisfaction are depicted in Figure 1. 66.4% of the variance in final satisfaction scores was accounted for in the first step in which received disclosure, equity, the general reward index, CL_{alt}, and the dissimilarity index were entered, with the latter three having significant beta weights. The addition of the various indices as measured in the Fall accounted for only 2.1% additional variance.

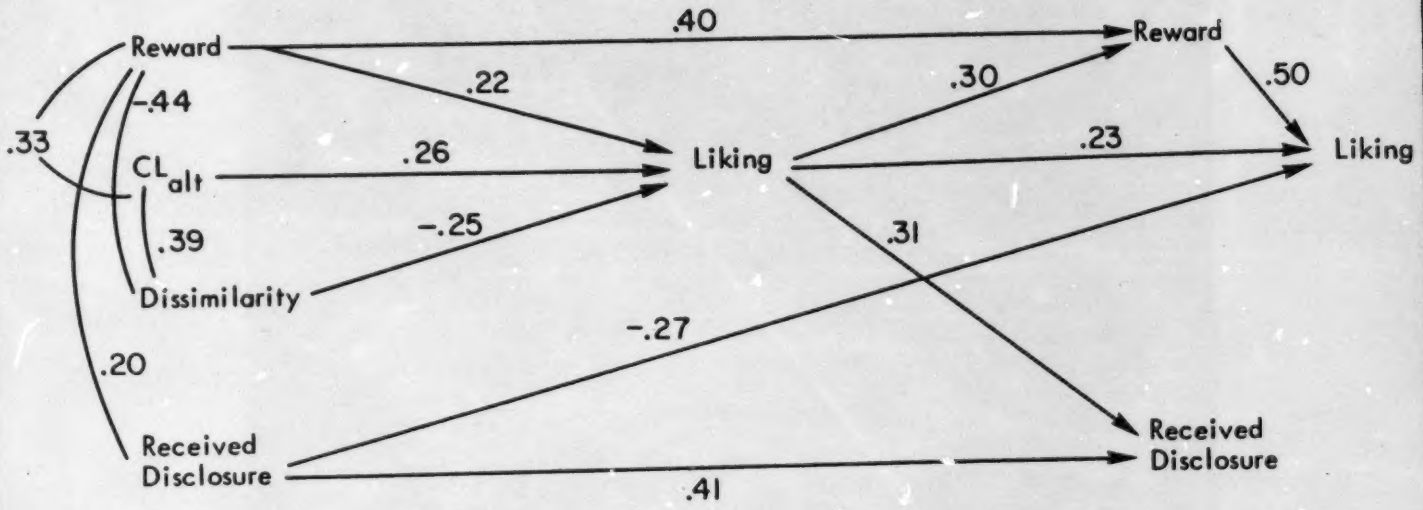
In the Fall, all the indices employed accounted for significant amounts of the variance in satisfaction while controlling for the others. Together they explain 66.5% of the variance in initial satisfaction.

It is noteworthy that initial satisfaction did not have a significant direct effect on final satisfaction. Effects of initial

ANALYSIS OF SATISFACTION



ANALYSIS OF LIKING



FALL

SPRING

satisfaction were indirect. Relationships exhibiting high degrees of satisfaction continued to do so only if this requlted in a continuing process of mutual reward and a continued superiority to alternatives.

Results from regressions performed on the liking index are shown in Figure 2. Entering the various measures from the Spring accounted for 42.5% of the variance in liking scores. However, as Figure 2 indicates, only the General Reward index had a significant effect when controlling for other variabels. An additional 9.8% of the variance in final liking was explained when the measures from Fall were entered. As can be seen in Figure 2, Reward, CL_{alt}, and similarity had significant influences on liking in the Fall and through this, indirect influences on final liking. An unexpected influence on final liking was exerted by the index measuring the amount of the roommate's disclosure in the Fall. Greater disclosure in the Fall was associated with less liking in the Spring. Several previous studies have found that intimate disclosure too soon may have negative effects (e.g. Archer & Berg, 1978; Archer & Burleson, 1979; Wortman, Adesman, Herman & Greenberg, 1976). Such results led Archer (1980) to conclude "the pattern for disclosure in developing relationships . . . is slow and easy does it" (p. 203). The question arises of why similar effects were not seen for liking as measured in the Fall. While any explanation is purely speculative, one might postulate that if a high level of disclosure early in a relationship is nonnormative and engenders reactance (Archer & Berg, 1978), it may be indicative of a pattern of unacceptable and reactanve-arousing behavior. In the Fall this whole pattern may not have had time to be perceived and/or subjects were particularly willing to give their roommate the benefit of any

doubts they may have had.

More factors appear to be of direct importance in the determination of initial liking and satisfaction than later liking and satisfaction. It is my hunch that this reflects a tendency for people in the early stages of acquaintanceship to be more actively involved in attempting to form hypotheses about the other and make forecasts regarding the future (cf. Altman & Taylor, 1973). They will consequently attend to and draw on more sources of information. Given the evidence cognitive psychologists have accumulated on the self-fulfilling nature of predictions and the tendency of people to seek out confirmatory information (e.g., Snyder & Swann, 1978; Swann & Read, 1981), such hypotheses may have very important effects on the course of a friendship. One way this may be examined is to compare results of discriminant analyses in which Fall and Spring measures are alternately used in predicting the final decision of whether to continue living together.

Discriminant Analyses:

Using the decision of whether or not to continue living together as the criterion variable, discriminant analyses were performed in order to assess the overall power of measured variables in Spring and Fall and to assess the relative importance of each variable in discriminating among the decisions. Results of these analyses are presented in Table 2. Both the analysis employing the Spring measures and that employing the measures for Fall resulted in 53.9% of the cases being correctly classified. It is quite noteworthy that prediction is just as accurate when factors are assessed only two weeks after the beginning of classes as it is after several months. This suggests that the decision of whether

to stay together may be made, at some level, very early in a relationship.

Table 2

Results of Discriminate Analysis

	Time of Measurement	
	Fall	Spring
Percentage of Cases Correctly classified	53.95	53.95
Chi Squared values		
1st discriminant function	23.07*	24.04**
2nd discriminant function	4.20	5.20
Wilkes lamda for		
Individual Measures		
Liking	.99	.93*
Satisfaction	.90**	.85***
Reward	.98	.85***
CL_{alt}	.97	.90**
Equity	.99	.96
Dissimilarity	.96	.87***
Received disclosure	.97	.99

Note: *p .08

**p .05

***p .01

While there was no difference in the overall accuracy of discrimination employing Spring and Fall measures, the measures showed differences in their individual ability to discriminate among the groups in Fall and Spring.

As indicated in Table 2, all measures except received disclosure and equity showed substantial individual discriminating power in the Spring. As measured in the Fall, only satisfaction showed significant individual discriminating power. As described above, however, satisfaction in the Fall was significantly influenced by all the other variables. I speculated before that early in the year subjects may be employing many kinds of information to make hypotheses about one another. It is tempting to add the further speculation that the increased individual power of these measures to discriminate among different groups indicates that hypotheses were largely confirmed.

Before attempting to summarize the date from this study, some restrictions on its generalizability must be acknowledged. It should be kept in mind that this was a volunteer sample and involves only same sex friendships. In opposite sex relationships or in the population as a whole the influence of the factors explored here may differ markedly. Research comparing same and opposite sex friendships is needed to evaluate this possibility and such research would add much to our understanding of friendship/relationship development.

Despite these limiting conditions, I believe the present study adds to our understanding of the process of friendship development in several ways. It provides a description of the operation of several factors important in friendship development at different times in the friendship and explores their relative importance at each time and the changes that occur in their influence. It also describes the covariation that occurs between roommates in regard to these processes.

In attempting to summarize this data, I would first call attention to intriguing implications emerging from the discriminant analysis that prediction of whether a relationship will continue is just as accurate after two weeks as six months. This suggests that a person would be well advised to keep in mind the fact that hypotheses may be self-fulfilling or the folk wisdom concerning the importance of first impressions.

The multiple regression analyses suggest that there is no single factor of overriding importance in determining these initial impressions and initial satisfaction. All the factors examined in this study were significant predictors of initial satisfaction when controlling for all the others. Reward, CL_{alt}, and similarity were significant predictors of initial liking. Over time, reward becomes most important in determining liking and with similarity and CL_{alt} continues to influence satisfaction.

Finally, while it may appear that the exchange of rewards or resources may be the most important factor over time in determining liking and satisfaction, the correlations between roommates suggest that the nature of the exchange process will change with time. I believe that such change is a reflection of attempts to solve problems of interdependency and to demonstrate responsiveness to a partner's needs or wishes in hope that the other will be similarly responsive to one's own needs and desires.

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